THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) provides assistance for the development of Khadi and Village Industries. In current financial year, a budget allocation of Rs. 392 crores has been made to KVIC under Plan Head.

The Government has decided to continue the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) of KVIC during 10th Plan period i.e. 31.03.2007, as well with a proposed investment of Rs. 1250 crores, generating 2.0 million additional employment opportunities in KVI sector.

(c) and (d) No Committee has been set up to review and to develop the Khadi and Village Industries during the current year. However, the Government vide its Resolution dated 5th October, 2000 constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri K.C. Pant, Dy. Chairman, Planning Commission to suggest suitable measures for strengthening the Khadi and Village Industry Sector. The recommendations made by the Pant Committee inter-alia include long term rebate policy, choice of rebate and MDA to Khadi institutions; working capital to Khadi institutions; Insurance to Khadi workers; quality control, marketing development, advertisement, brand promotion, renovation and modernization of bhawans and marketing outlets, design and packaging facilities, upgradation of data bank, cluster development, etc.

Based on the recommendations made by the Committee, the Government of India had announced a package on 14.05.2001. The package is under different phases of implementation.

Utilization of Beaches blessed with Thorium

1613. SHRI RAMAMUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the steps taken to utilize Kerala and Tamil Nadu beaches blessed with Thorium for production of electricity at an affordable price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): Considering the enormous energy potential of the abundant Thorium resource in beach sands, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has already worked out plans for generation of nuclear power based on Thorium. As a first step the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has designed a 300 MW(e) Advanced

Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR) where most of its power will be derived from Thorium based fuels. Implementation of AHWR will also help establish all the related technologies for production and reprocessing of fuels based on Thorium.

Indigenous Production of Radio Isotopes

1614. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Atomic Energy Commission is developing irradiation units to disinfect industrial products;

(b) if so, what are the various areas of operation of such equipment;

(c) whether the country is producing radio-isotopes to support such irradiation and industrial uses;

(d) if so, what are the targets of indigenous production of radio-isotopes for industrial, agricultural and medical goods-disinfection for the next three years; and

(e) whether there is a possibility of earning foreign exchange also on account of indigenous production thereof and if so, the targets fixed for the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. Irradiation technology is being used to disinfect industrial, medical as well as food products.

(b) The Department owns and operates a plant for sterilization of medial products (ISOMED) at Trombay, Mumbai and one in Navi Mumbai for radiation processing of spices and other products. A plant for sludge hygienization (SHRI) has been set up at Baroda. Plants have been set up at Kottayam, Kerala for Rubber Board for vulcanization of rubber latex, one plant each at Shriram Centre for Industrial Research, Delhi, and Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO), Bangalore has been set up for sterilization of medical products. Yet another plant has been set up at Jodhpur for Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for R&D purposes.

(c) Board of Radiation & Isotope Technology (BRIT), a constituent unit under the Department of Atomic Energy is producing Cobalt-60, a radioisotope to support such units.